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Message Text

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PAGE 01 DOHA 00887 180526Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-03 DHA-02
MCT-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /059 W
----------095519 180535Z /15
R 171150Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2822
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0887

KUWAIT FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PLO, LE
SUBJECT: EMBASSY DOHA FSL QUESTIONED, RELEASED BY FEDAYEEN IN BEIRUT

1. SUMMARY: DURING OVERNIGHT VISIT TO BEIRUT ENROUTE FROM DOHA TO CAIRO, EMBASSY DOHA FSL SAID YOUNIS TAHA, A PALESTINIAN, WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AT GUNPOINT, QUESTIONED, AND SEVEN HOURS LATER RELEASED BY FEDAYEEN. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO TAHA, ON JUNE 7 HE ARRIVED IN BEIRUT FOR OVER-NIGHT VISIT WITH RELATIVES IN HARIT HARAIKH DISTRICT IN SOUTHERN BEIRUT. AT 1930 HOURS (ALL TIMES BEIRUT LOCAL) A MAN ARMED WITH AN AUTOMATIC WEAPON AND CLAIMING TO BE FROM PLO FORCED HIS WAY INTO THE DOOR OF THE HOME OF FSL'S BROTHER-IN-LAW WHERE FSL WAS STAYING AND ASKED FOR SAID TAHA. TAHA, WHO WAS IN THE ROOM AT THE TIME, REMAINED SILENT AND WAS NOT IDENTIFIED. AN ARGUMENT DEVELOPED AND IN THE COURSE OF THE ARGUMENT THE BROTHER-IN-LAW DISARMED THE UNWANTED GUEST AND EJECTED HIM FROM THE HOUSE.

3. AT APPROXIMATELY 2030 HRS THREE MORE ARMED MEN CAME TO THE
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DOOR AND ENTERED AT GUNPOINT. ACCORDING TO TAHA, TWO WERE ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND THE THIRD, WEARING AN OFFICER'S UNIFORM, CARRIED A PISTOL. THEY AGAIN DEMANDED TAHA, WHO THIS TIME IDENTIFIED HIMSELF. THE ARMED MEN DEMANDED THAT TAHA ACCOMPANY THEM TO THEIR OFFICES. WHEN TAHA INITIALLY REFUSED, A GUN WAS PUT TO HIS HEAD AND HE WAS TOLD THAT IF HE DID NOT GO THEY WOULD KILL HIM IMMEDIATELY. AT THIS THREAT

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TAHA AGREED TO GO.

4. ACCORDING TO TAHA, HE WAS INITIALLY KEPT IN A DARK ROOM "ABOUT ONE HOUR", AND THEN BROUGHT OUT THREE TIMES FOR QUESTIONING CONCERNING HIS JOB AT EMBASSY DOHA, HIS LENGTH OF SERVICE AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS AND OPINIONS ABOUT AMERICANS AT THE EMBASSY. DURING THE INTERROGATIONS HE WAS THREATNED AND AT ONE POINT STRUCK BETWEEN THE SHOULDER BLADES WITH THE BUTT OF A RIFLE. ACCORDING TO TAHA, HE TOLD THE INTERROGATORS THAT HE HAD WORKED FOR THE EMBASSY FIVE YEARS, AND THAT HE WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH ALL THE AMERICANS AT THE EMBASSY AND WITH OTHER AMERICANS IN DOHA. TAHA SAYS HE WAS ACCUSED OF NOT BEING A "GOOD PALESTINIAN" BECAUSE HE WAS FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS BUT THAT HE MAINTAINED THAT HIS CREDENTIALS AS A PALESTINIAN WERE ESTABLISHED AND THAT HE HAD MORE CLAIM TO THAT NAME THAN HIS CAPTORS.

5. ACCORDING TO TAHA, THE INTERROGATION ENDED WITH THE CHIEF INTERROGATOR DEMANDING THE APOLOGIES OF TAHA TO HIS CAPTORS. TAHA SAYS HE REFUSED TO DO THIS AND DEMANDED THEIR APOLOGY TO HIM. IN THE END, THE OFFICER TOLD THE OTHER CAPTORS TO SHAKE HANDS WITH TAHA AND THEY THEN TOOK HIM BACK TO THE HOME OF HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW. TAHA GOT A FEW HOURS SLEEP AND THEN WENT TO THE AIRPORT TO CONTINUE HIS TRIP TO CAIRO.

6. ACCORDING TO TAHA,HE DID NOT NOTIFY EMBASSY DOHA OF HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBLEMS IN BEIRUT BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID THAT HE WOULD BE FOLLOWED TO EMBASSY BEIRUT IF HE TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. WHEN HE ARRIVED IN CAIRO HE BECAME ILL AND RETURNED TO DOHA WHEN HE WAS WELL ENOUGH TO TRAVEL. TAHA'S WIFE, WHO IS RESIDENT IN ALEXANDRIA, ALSO BECAME ILL WHEN TOLD OF HIS EXPERIENCES IN BEIRUT.

7 ACCORDING TO TAHA, HE HAS NO IDEA HOW THE FEDAYEEN KNEW THAT HE HAD RETURNED TO BEIRUT. HIS CAPTORS OBVIOUSLY DID NOT KNOW WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE SINCE HE HAD TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF TO THEM. TAHA SAID HE DID NOT KNOW TO WHICH FACTION HIS CAPTORS BELONGED, BUT THAT BY THEIR ACCENTS HE COULD TELL THAT THE OFFICER WAS FROM GAZA AND THAT THE OTHERS WERE "BEIRUT PALESTINIANS."
YOUNG

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NNN

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